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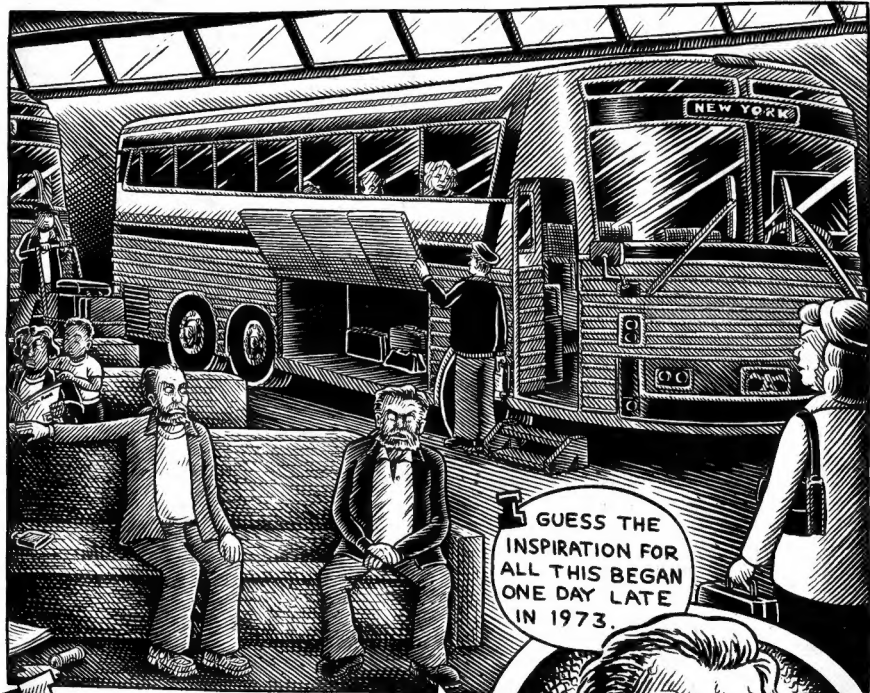
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THE MAN WHO WOULD BE WALDO! AND MORE!



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I GUESS THE
INSPIRATION FOR
ALL THIS BEGAN
ONE DAY LATE
IN 1973.

I WAS SITTING IN THE SAN FRANCISCO
BUS DEPOT, WAITING TO PUT MY JUNKIE
BROTHER ON A NEW YORK BOUND BUS.

HE'D BURNED ALL HIS BRIDGES IN THE
BAY AREA, AND A LOT OF PEOPLE TOO.



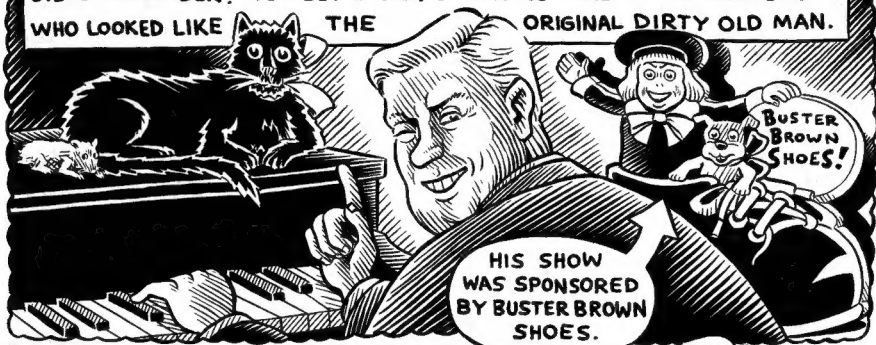
IT WAS
TIME FOR HIM
TO BEAT IT,
AND BOY
WAS HE IN
BAD SHAPE!



ANYWAY SUDDENLY, APROPOS OF
NOTHING, HE TURNED AND SAID,

HEY! REMEMBER THAT OLD T.V. SHOW WE
USED TO WATCH, SMILIN' ED'S GANG?

DID I REMEMBER? YOU BET I DID! SMILIN' ED WAS A FAT OLD GUY WHO LOOKED LIKE THE ORIGINAL DIRTY OLD MAN.



EVEN THEN WE KIDS COULD TELL, THAT ON ED'S SHOW, BUSTER BROWN WAS REALLY PLAYED BY THIS WEIRD-LOOKING MIDGET.

I'M BUSTER BROWN, I LIVE IN A SHOE. HERE'S MY DOG TIGE, HE LIVES THERE TOO.



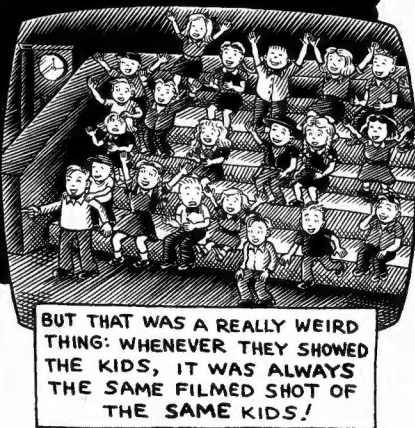
ED WOULD TELL STORIES OUT OF A BIG BOOK THAT SEGUED INTO CHEESY FILMED ADVENTURES.

I'VE GOT TO ADMIT, THEY WERE A BIG SNORE; USUALLY ABOUT SOME KID IN INDIA.

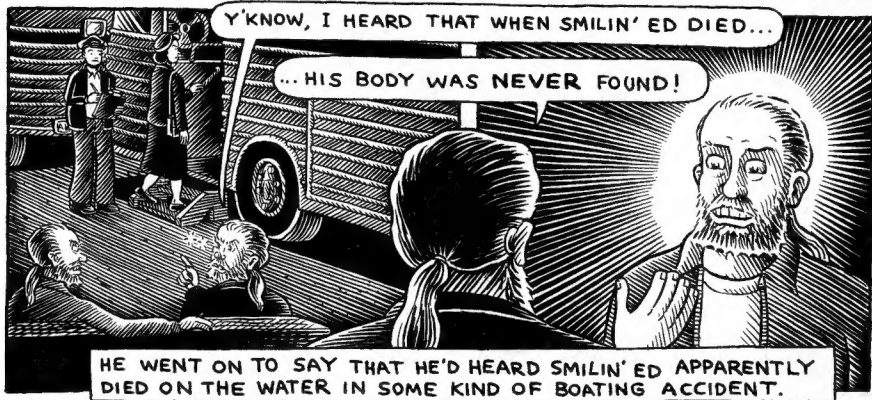
THEN ED WOULD BRING ON HIS ANIMAL SIDE-KICKS. THERE WAS SQUEAKY THE MOUSE, PLAYED BY A HAMSTER, AND MIDNIGHT THE CAT, WHO MAY HAVE BEEN STUFFED, AND WHO SAID ONLY ONE WORD, NICE.



AND PROCEED TO DISRUPT A COMEDY LECTURE OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER.



ANYWAY, AFTER I ACKNOWLEDGED REMEMBERING THE SHOW, MY BROTHER SAID,...



I THINK I MIGHT HAVE MADE SOME LAME CRACK AT THAT POINT ABOUT FROGGY PULLING ED UNDER THE SEA, BUT I'M NOT SURE;



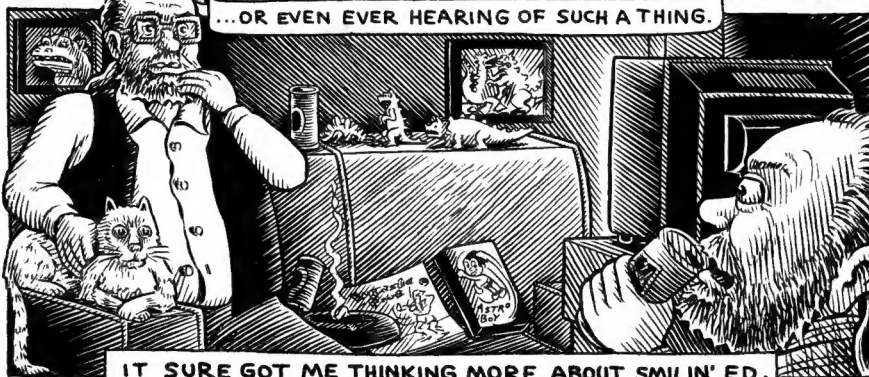
THE NEXT TIME I SAW MY BROTHER, HE'D KICKED THE HABIT, GOT MARRIED, AND OWNED HIS OWN HOUSE IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY.



HIS ODD REMARK ABOUT SMILIN' ED HAD STAYED WITH ME, BUT WHEN I BROUGHT IT UP, HE HAD NO MEMORY OF EVER SAYING IT,

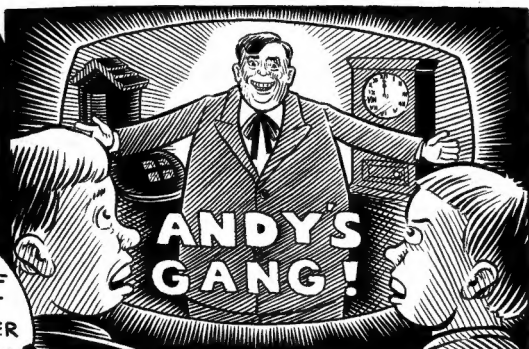


...OR EVEN EVER HEARING OF SUCH A THING.





THE THING IS, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER OR NOT HIS BODY WAS EVER FOUND, HERE INDEED WAS A TRULY DISAPPEARED PERSONALITY.



AFTER SMILIN' ED DIED IN 1954, THE SHOW LEFT THE AIR ONLY TO REAPPEAR A YEAR LATER AS ANDY'S GANG, HOSTED BY HOLLYWOOD FAT MAN, ANDY DEVINE.

BUT OUTSIDE OF SOME NEW FOOTAGE OF DEVINE, IT WAS THE SAME OLD SHOW, RECYCLED.



... SAME TIRED OLD ADVENTURES,



SAME MIDGET BUSTER BROWN,



SAME MIDNIGHT, SQUEAKY, AND FROGGY THE GREMLIN,



EVEN THE SAME SHOT OF THOSE SAME DAMN KIDS.

SAME DAMN EVERYTHING,

EXCEPT FOR SMILIN' ED HIMSELF!



TODAY, IF THE SHOW IS REMEMBERED AT ALL,...

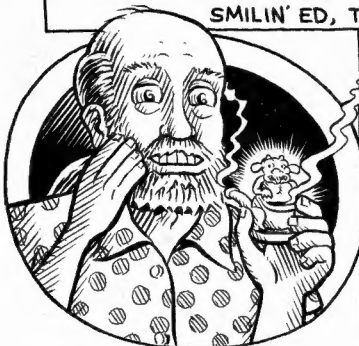
YOU MEAN THAT WEIRD SHOW WITH FROGGY THE GREMLIN?

YEAH, THAT WAS FAR FUCKIN' OUT!

...IT'S USUALLY IN ITS REINCARNATED FORMAT AS ANDY'S GANG.

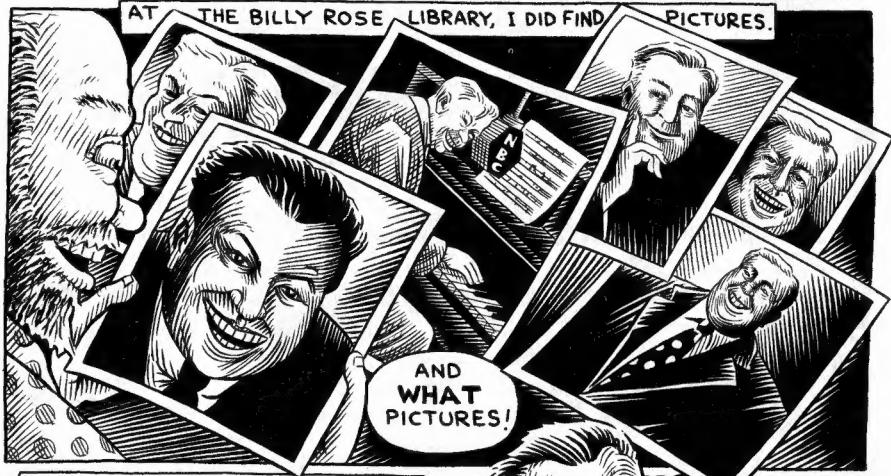
YEAH, WITH THAT FAT GUY! YEAH, ANDY'S GANG!

IT OCCURRED TO ME THAT IF I COULD FIND OUT A LITTLE MORE ABOUT SMILIN' ED, THERE MIGHT BE A GOOD STORY IN IT.

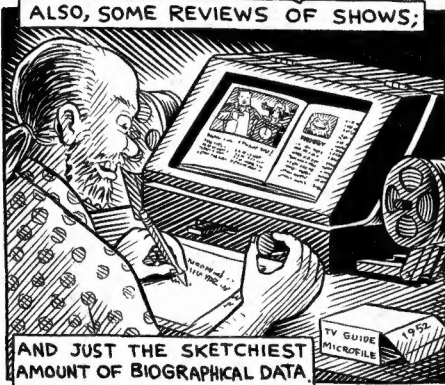


BUT POKING AROUND, I DISCOVERED THAT ABSOLUTELY NO SMILIN' ED SHOWS WERE AVAILABLE ON THE VIDEO TAPE MARKET. ANDY'S GANG? YES. SMILIN' ED? FORGET IT!

AT THE BILLY ROSE LIBRARY, I DID FIND PICTURES.



ALSO, SOME REVIEWS OF SHOWS;

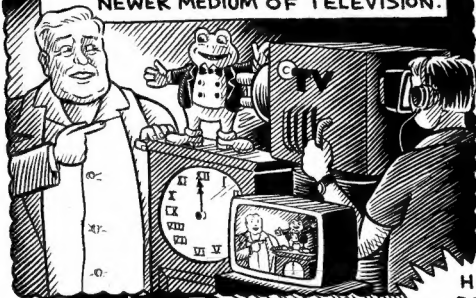


AND JUST THE SKETCHIEST AMOUNT OF BIOGRAPHICAL DATA.



ED WAS BORN IN GEORGIA, AND GOT INTO THE NEW MEDIUM OF RADIO IN 1922.

SO HE WAS ALREADY A LONG-TIME VETERAN KIDDIE HOST IN 1950, WHEN HE TOOK A FLYER IN THE EVEN NEWER MEDIUM OF TELEVISION.



AND FINALLY, TANTALIZINGLY, HE DIED IN 1954 OF AN APPARENT HEART ATTACK ON A CABIN CRUISER HE OWNED.

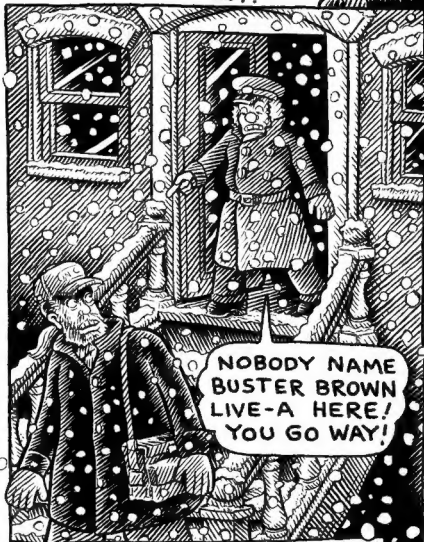


HE
DID
DIE ON A
BOAT!

BUT THAT WAS IT; OR ALMOST IT. THERE WAS ONE OTHER LITTLE PEARL OF INFORMATION ONE OF HIS OBITS DID MENTION THAT A MEMORIAL WAS HELD AT SOMETHING CALLED THE BUSTER BROWN MUSEUM AT 119 EAST 36TH STREET, IN NEW YORK CITY. I DECIDED TO CHECK IT OUT.



WHAT I FOUND WAS A BEAUTIFUL TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY BROWNSTONE, JUST OFF PARK AVENUE.



NOBODY NAME
BUSTER BROWN
LIVE-A HERE!
YOU GO WAY!

BUT THE WEIRD GEEK WHO WAS GUARDING THE PLACE WAS NEITHER HELPFUL OR FRIENDLY.

JUST ON A HUNCH, I ASKED AT A NEARBY COMIC BOOK STORE IF THEY KNEW OF ANY SORT OF BUSTER BROWN MUSEUM HAVING BEEN IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD. THE KID BEHIND THE COUNTER KNEW NOTHING AND CARED LESS.

BUSTER WHO?

BUT THE OWNER WAS FRIENDLIER AND WAS ACTUALLY FAIRLY HELPFUL.

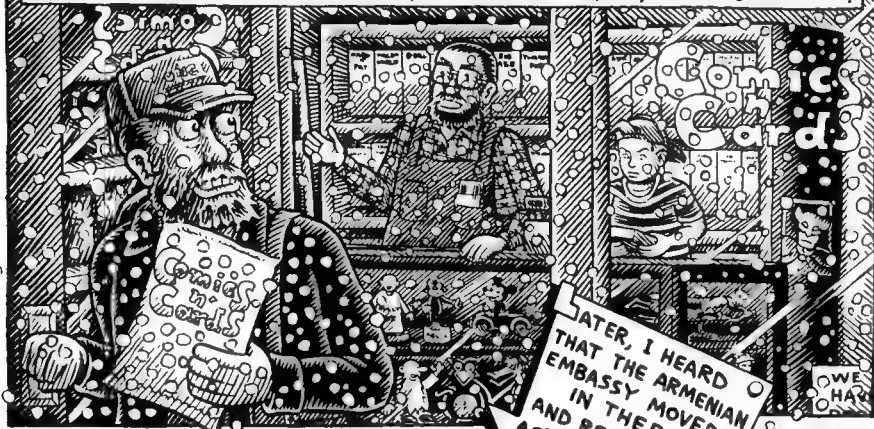
IT TURNED OUT THAT SMILIN' ED COMICS, PRODUCED AS A PROMOTIONAL GIVEAWAY BY BUSTER BROWN SHOES IN THE 1950'S ARE FAIRLY COLLECTABLE.

THE TV SHOW'S DULL ADVENTURE SEGMENTS WERE DRAWN IN THE COMICS BY REED CRANDALL, ONE OF THE ALL-TIME GREAT COMIC BOOK ARTISTS.

WHAT'S MORE, THIS GUY HAD HEARD STORY'S OF A BUSTER BROWN MUSEUM AT 116 EAST 36TH STREET TOO; AND HAD EVEN LOOKED INTO THE POSSIBILITY OF OPENING HIS STORE THERE.

BUT THE BUILDING TURNED OUT TO BE NOT FOR RENT AT ANY PRICE.

AND AS I WAS LEAVING, HE LET FLY WITH A PARTING SHOT. APPARENTLY THE BUILDING HAD THE REPUTATION, IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, OF BEING HAUNTED!



PART 2

LISSEN!
IF DEITCH
HAPPIN' OUT IN
Y DEPARTMENT
FEW YEARS,
AIN'T **MY**
FAULT!

HEY!
I GAVE HIM
PLENTY OF
IDEAS!

CHECK THIS OUT.

A FAGGOT CYBORG
AIDS MONSTER IS
JERKING OFF IN THE
NEW YORK CITY
RESERVOIR! *

IF IT COMES, EVERY MAN, WOMAN AND CHILD
IN NEW YORK WILL GET AIDS!

**Numero
Uno!**

MEANWHILE, I'M IN MY
MANHATTAN PENTHOUSE,
HAVING ABSOLUTELY SAFE SEX
WITH SIGOURNEY WEAVER.
BUT HEY! WHEN DUTY
CALLS, ... I'M READY!

IN A HIGH TECH ROBOT OF MY OWN DESIGN, I KICK MAJOR BUTT!
THE CLIMACTIC BATTLE IS FAN-FUCKING-TASTIC! BUT WAY TOO COOL FOR DEITCH!



SO THEN I GAVE HIM RAPPIN' RASTIS! TOTALLY UP TO DATE!
IN THIS ONE I WOULD HAVE PLAYED AN AFRICAN AMERICAN
HOMELESS GUY WITH TWO FISTS OF IRON AND
THE MYSTIC SOUL OF A POET!

YO' SLAVIN' WAYS IS AT HALF MAST!

YO' ASS
IS GRASS!

WE
MOVIN'
FAST!

IN IT, ME AND A MILLION BLACK
MEN, OVERTHROW AMERIKA'S ENSLAVING
POWER STRUCTURE!

FO' BETTAH DAYS,
A NEWER PHASE!

THAT'S GONNA LEAVE YOU
INNA DAZE!

AFTER OFFING A
FEW RING LEADERS,
WE MAKE THEM
INTO SLAVES
AND ABOLISH
THE INCOME
TAX!

TOTALLY VISIONARY!

BUT DID HE GIVE IT A CHANCE?

HELL NO!

HE'D JUST SIT MOPING LIKE I WASN'T EVEN THERE!



TRYING TO WORK UP SOME FUCKED-UP NOSTALGIA STORY ABOUT A FAT OLD TV STAR FROM THE YEAR ONE!

AT A CERTAIN POINT, I DECIDED IT WAS TIME FOR ME TO MOVE ON. LAST I HEARD, HE WAS DOIN' SOMETHING CALLED FINGER LICKIN' RUNAWAYS FOR SOME KID'S MAGAZINE.



WOO WOO!

IT'S ABOUT ALL THESE LIVING CHICKEN PARTS RUNNING AMOCK!

YIKES!

SOUNDS PRETTY WEIRD, IF YOU ASK ME!

EEK!

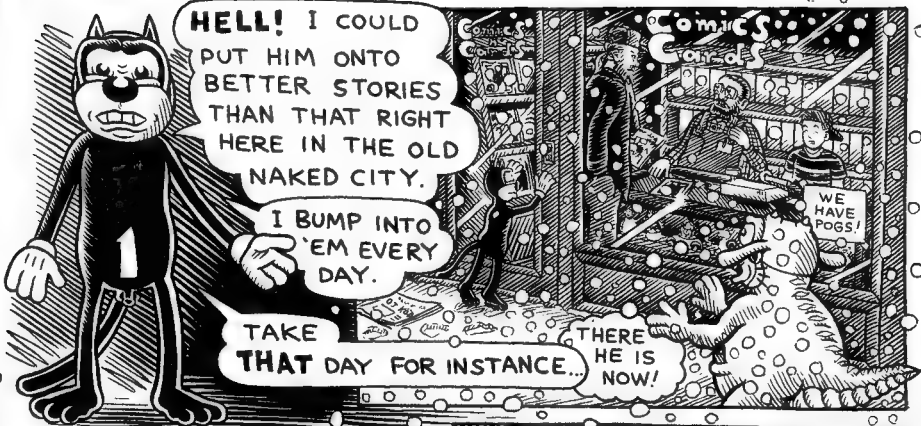
COWABUNGA!

THEN ONE DAY, ABOUT A YEAR AGO, I SAW HIM IN AN UPSCALE COMIC BOOK STORE, OVER ON PARK AVENUE.



PREDICTABLY ENOUGH, HE HAD HIS NOSE DEEP IN SOME MOLDY OLD COMIC BOOK.

POOR OLD DEITCH, THE OLD DOBBIN OF COMICS!

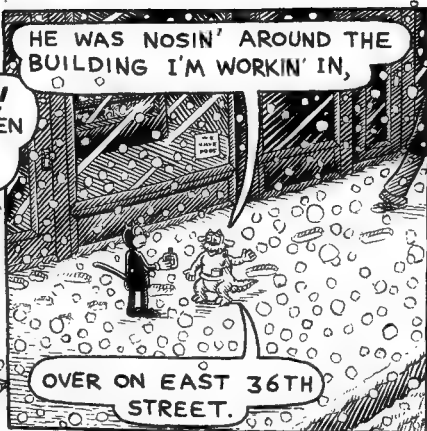






WALKS RIGHT
BY LIKE HE
DON'T EVEN ...

HEY!
I'VE SEEN
THAT
GUY!



HE WAS NOSIN' AROUND THE
BUILDING I'M WORKIN' IN,

OVER ON EAST 36TH
STREET.



YEAH, ME AND A BUNCH
OF THE OLD GANG ARE
OVER THERE HAUNTIN'
TH' PLACE!

YEAH?



SOFT JOB TOO!
HEY! WHY DON'T
YOU COME OVER!

WE
HAVE
POGS

COME ON! IT'LL BE
A REGULAR OLD HOME WEEK!



AND SO ...

WALDO!
YOU OLD-A
SON OF A BITCH!

SHOTSY!

SO! SHOTS. YOU STILL RUNNIN' ERRANDS FOR THAT OLD SHIT BAG ABRAXAS?

YEAH SURE!

THAT'S A HIM RIGHT OVER THERE!

WELL, WHAT DO Y'KNOW! SO HOW'S IT HANGIN' BRAXY?

FUCK YOU!

AH, SAME OLD CHARM BOY I SEE.

AH NEVER MIND - A HIM! COME ON! YEAH!

OOOOOH WA-A-LDO!

HEY! HEY!

LOOKA WHO'S HERE!

WALDO! So Good
to SEE YOU!

BEHE-E-MOTH!

(KOFF KOFF)

HEY!

IT TURNED OUT THAT
THIS MOTLEY CREW OF
DEMONS HAD BEEN
HIRED TO SCARE A
SNOOPING INTRUDER.

IF ANYONE COMES
AROUND...

...I
JUST
GIVE 'EM
THE OLD
BEHEMOTH
SPECIAL
SEE?

UH
YEAH!

OR ONE OF
MY TOUGH TITTIES
WILL TAKE A
BITE OUT
OF
CRIME!

YOW!

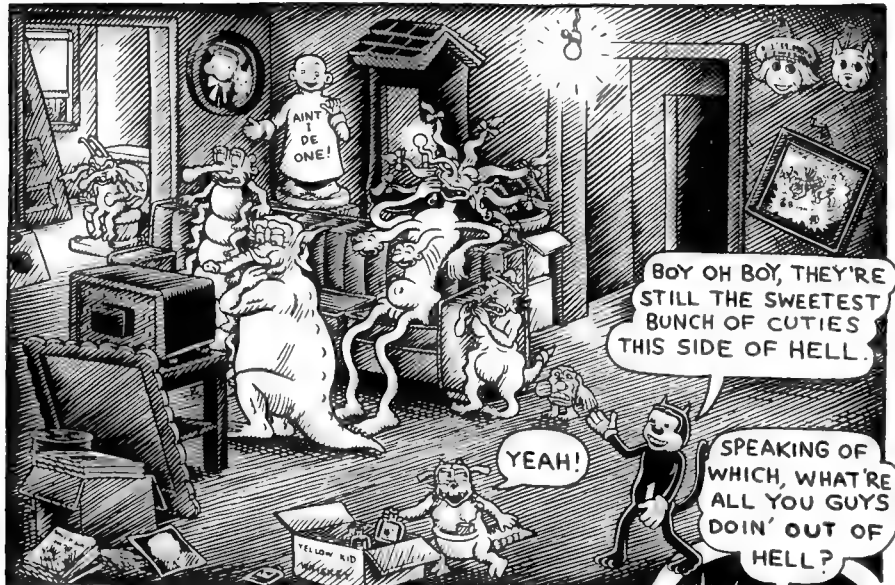
HECATE! YOU CUT-A DAT OUT!

HEY YOU!
LAY OFF
HIM SEE!

THEN KEEP YOUR
LITTLE BLOW BOY
AWAY FROM

ME!

OH REE-LLY!



WELL, UH, Y'SEE, THIS PLACE WAS SOME KIND OF A MUSEUM. YEAH, TH' BUSTER BROWN MUSEUM; AND WE'RE GUARDIN' IT 'TILL THE GUYS THAT HIRED US CAN GET THIS BUSTER BROWN STUFF OUTTA HERE!

OH MAN!

WHAT DEITCH WOULDN'T GIVE TO SEE THAT!

OH YEAH, THAT'S SMILIN' ED. WE WATCH HIS SHOW EVERY DAY.

WHAT'RE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT! THAT SHOW AIN'T BEEN ON IN YEARS!

SMILIN' ED AND BUSTER

WE GET IT IN ON THAT SET EVERY DAY.

WELL I DUNNO,...UH,...

WE GET IT
IN ON **THAT**
SET EVERY DAY.

HUH?

HEY!
HEY!
IT'S-A
WALDO!

HEY
KIDSH.

WAIT A MINUTE!

WITH MOUNTING RAGE I WATCHED, AS
A SORRY PAGEANT, ALMOST FORGOTTEN,



UNFOLDED UPON THE LITTLE SCREEN,



THAT'S RIGHT!

**BLARNEY
ROSE
BAR**

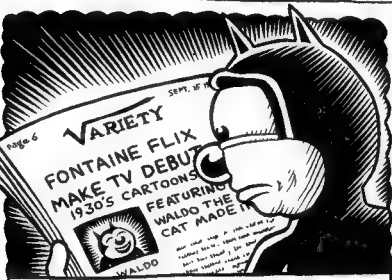
BAR

AND IF YOU'LL
ALL JUST
SHUT YER
YAPS A
MINUTE,
I'LL
TELL
YA
ABOUT,

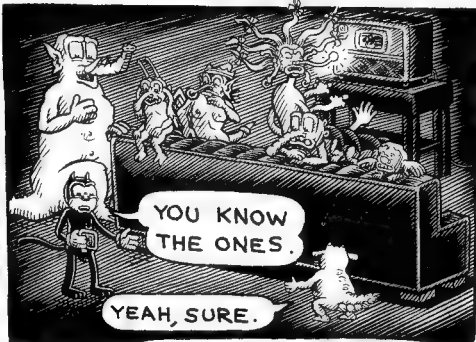
HEY! IT WAS
WEIRD!

AND THE WHOLE THING PROBABLY
NEVER WOULD HAVE HAPPENED
BUT FOR A TWIST OF FATE THAT
FOUND ME OUT IN FRONT OF THE
BLARNEY ROSE BAR IN 1954.

THE MAN WHO WOULD BE WALDO!

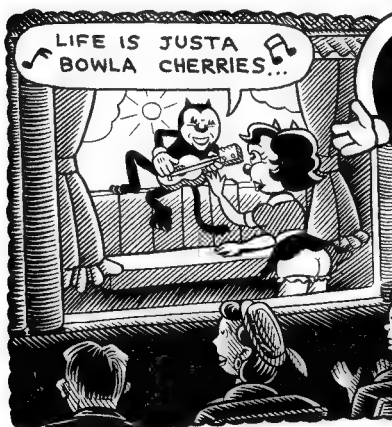


I'D JUST BEEN READING THAT THE
OLD FONTAINE FABLES CARTOONS WERE
ABOUT TO BE RELEASED TO T.V.



YOU KNOW
THE ONES.

YEAH, SURE.

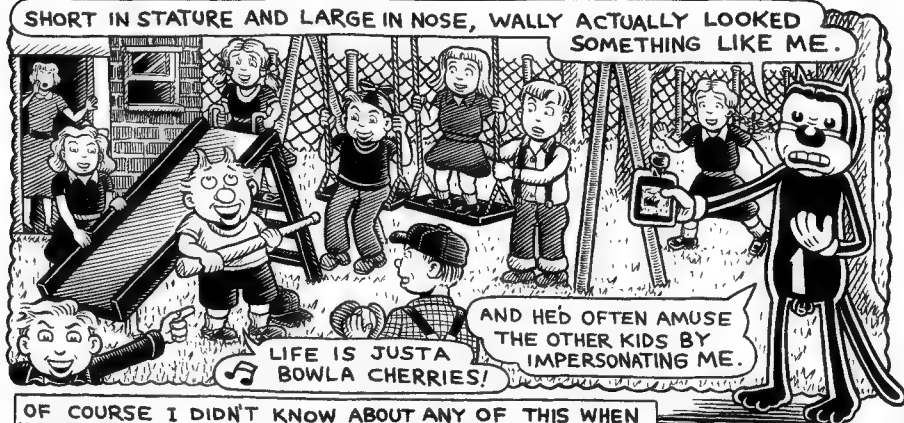


LIFE IS JUST A
BOWLA CHERRIES...

WELL NATURALLY THIS
INTERESTED ME, SINCE MOST
OF THOSE CARTOONS STARRED
YOURS TRULY.

AND IN THE 1930S,
WHEN HE WAS JUST A
KID, LITTLE WALDY FELDER
WAS MY
BIGGEST FAN.

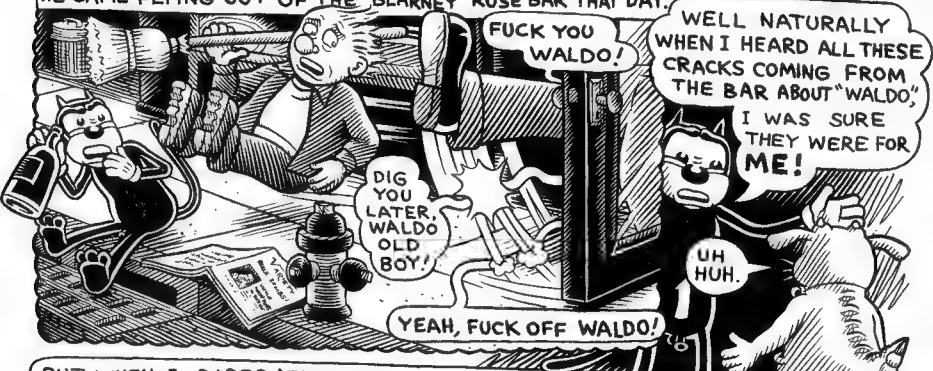
SHORT IN STATURE AND LARGE IN NOSE, WALLY ACTUALLY LOOKED SOMETHING LIKE ME.



LIFE IS JUST A
BOWLA CHERRIES!

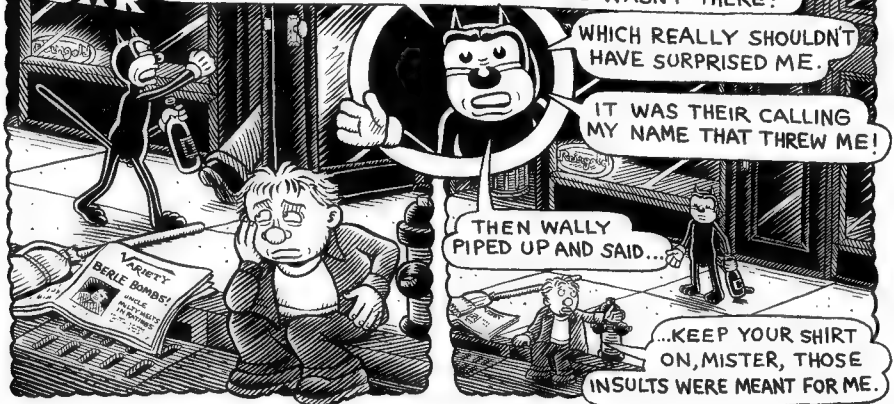
AND HE'D OFTEN AMUSE
THE OTHER KIDS BY
IMPERSONATING ME.

OF COURSE I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT ANY OF THIS WHEN
HE CAME FLYING OUT OF THE BLARNEY ROSE BAR THAT DAY.



YEAH, FUCK OFF WALDO!

BUT WHEN I DARED 'EM TO SAY THAT STUFF TO MY FACE, THEY MARCHED
RIGHT BACK INTO THAT BAR LIKE I WASN'T THERE!



WHICH REALLY SHOULDN'T
HAVE SURPRISED ME.

IT WAS THEIR CALLING
MY NAME THAT THREW ME!

THEN WALLY
PIPED UP AND SAID...

...KEEP YOUR SHIRT
ON, MISTER, THOSE
INSULTS WERE MEANT FOR ME.

...YA SEE, THEY THINK I'M Y,...
THEN HE LOOKED AND SAW ME!

YOW!

WELL YOU KNOW,
SINCE HE THOUGHT
I WAS JUST SOME
IMAGINARY CARTOON
CHARACTER, SEEIN'
ME KIND OF
THREW HIM.

SO I CUT HIM IN ON
THE WINE I WAS DRINKING
AND CLUED HIM IN ON
A FEW THINGS...

I EXPLAINED THAT I WAS
AS REAL AS HE WAS,

BUT
BEING A
LOW GRADE
DEMON AND
ALL,

...ONLY A FEW FLAKEY LOSERS
LIKE HIMSELF COULD ACTUALLY SEE ME.

HEY!
TELL ME
ABOUT
IT!

LIKE THAT PITIFUL BUM, NATHAN
MISHKIN, THAT I TRAINED UP
TO DO ALL THOSE WALDO
ANIMATED CARTOONS.

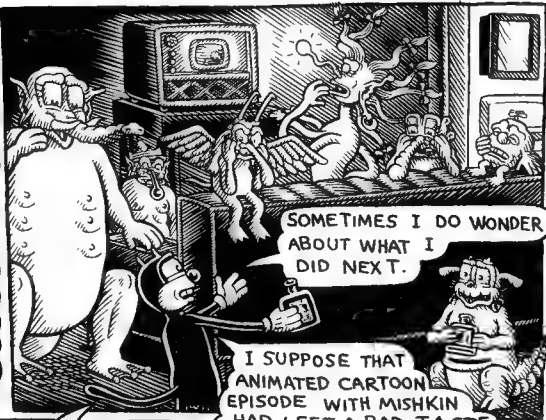
AND YOU
BETTER BELIEVE
I STRAIGHTENED
HIM OUT ON WHO
THE **REAL** BRAINS
ON THAT DEAL
WAS!

AND WALLY FILLED
ME IN ON HIS OWN
PITIFUL BACKGROUND.

LIFE IS JUST A
BOWLA CHERRIES.

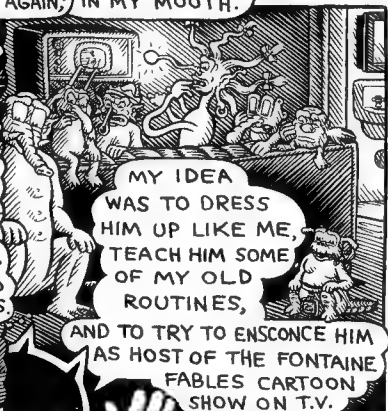
HE WAS **STILL** DOIN' THAT TIRED OUT
IMPERSONATION OF ME IN BARS,
CADGIN'DRINKS WITH IT WHEN HE COULD.

BUT AS HE BABBLLED ON,
I TOOK ANOTHER LOOK AT
MY PAPER, AND AN IDEA
TOOK HOLD.



I GUESS I JUST HAD TO PROVE I COULD DO IT AGAIN,
AND WITH THE COMMONEST CONCEIVABLE CLAY.

LIFE IS JUSTA BOWLA
CHERRIES,



HELL, ALL HE'D
REALLY HAVE TO DO
WAS INTRODUCE MY
OLD CARTOONS AND
SELL STUFF INBETWEEN.



JUST THE SAME,
FOR THE NEXT SIX WEEKS, I WORKED
THAT SAP LONG AND HARD!





LIFE IS
JUSTA
BOWLA
CHE-RRIES,
SO LIVE
N' LAUGH
AT IT
A-ALL!

YES!

AND WHEN FONTAINE
FUNTIME PREMIERED, BY
GOD, WALLY FELDER
WAS ME!

HI GANG!

WALLY WAS ACTUALLY MORE POPULAR
THAN THE CARTOONS! AND HE WAS
GREAT AT COMMERCIALS.

SO KIDS,
GET MOM TO PUT BOVRIL BEEF EXTRACT
IN SOME HOT MILK.

OKAY
WALDO!

IT'LL PUT SOME
HEY! HEY! IN
YOUR DAY!
THE
WALDO
WAY!

HEY
MOM!

IT SEEMED LIKE HE COULD
SELL JUST ABOUT ANYTHING.

PREDICTABLY, IT ALL WENT TO HIS
HEAD. HE BEGAN TO WEAR THAT
DAMN WALDO SUIT EVERYWHERE!

C'MON WALLY,
WE'VE GOT TEN
PAGES TO LEARN! REALLY!

CAN'T YOU
SEE I'M BUSY!

KEEP THOSE
DRINKS COMING
MY MAN.

I COULDN'T GET HIM TO REHEARSE, AND WORSE YET, HE WAS STARTING
TO TREAT ME LIKE A LACKEY. SOMETHING DEFINITELY HAD TO GIVE!

THE WAY I SAW IT,
WALLY NEEDED A
LESSON.



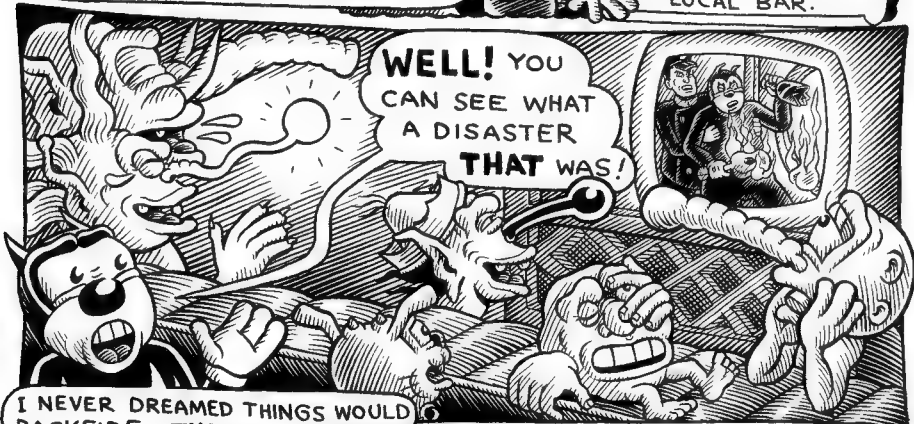
SO ON APRIL FIRST, 1954, INSTEAD OF
DOING THE SHOW WITH WALLY...

AND AWAY WE GO!



... I DECIDED TO SIT
ONE OUT AND WATCH
THE SHOW FROM A
LOCAL BAR.

WELL! YOU
CAN SEE WHAT
A DISASTER
THAT WAS!



I NEVER DREAMED THINGS WOULD
BACKFIRE THAT BAD!

BUT WALLY WAS
IN NO FORGIVING
MOOD. HE WAS
THROUGH ON T.V.
AND THROUGH
WITH ME TOO.

HE DID MANAGE
TO BUM DRINKS
ON THE STRENGTH
OF HIS NOTORIETY
FOR AWHILE.

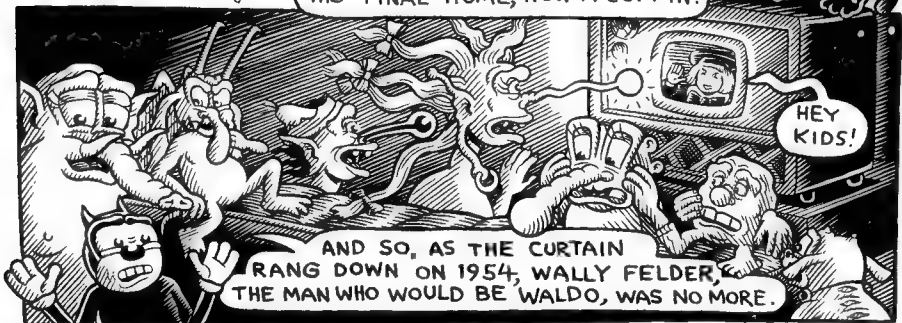


BUT THEN WINTER CAME...

I KINDA LOST TOUCH WITH WALLY AFTER THAT, ALTHOUGH I DID HEAR HE WAS WORKIN' IN THE HUBERT'S MUSEUM FREAK SHOW OVER ON 42ND STREET.



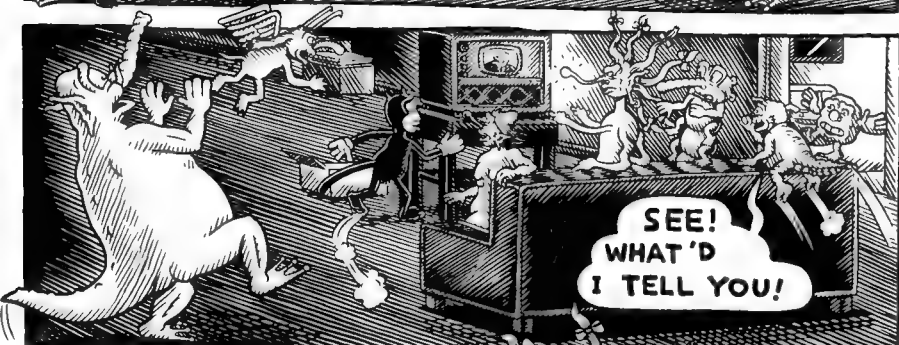
AND IT PROBABLY HASTENED WALLY'S INEVITABLE FINISH.



HEY!
Look! LOOK!
SMILIN' ED!

OOH!

HUH?



WELL I'LL BE
DAMNED!

HEY! DOWN IN FRONT!

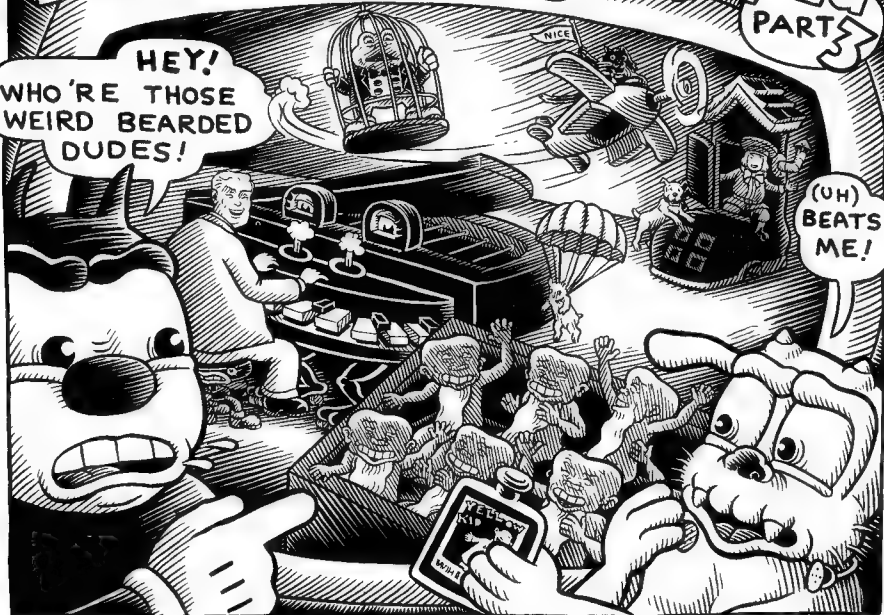


AND BRÚ-THER! IT WAS WEIRDER AND WACKIER THAN EVER!

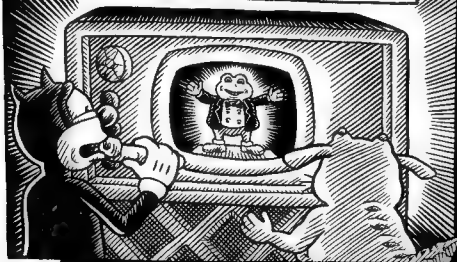
The Search For Smilin' Ed

PART 3

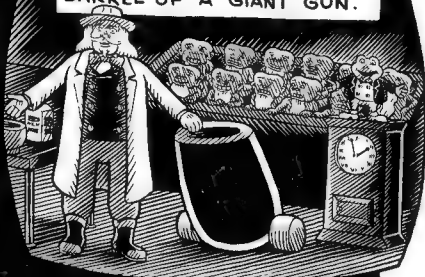
HEY!
WHO'RE THOSE
WEIRD
BEARDED
DUDES!



THEN FROGGY DID HIS TURN,
WHICH AT FIRST, WASN'T SO
DIFFERENT FROM THE OLD SHOW.



THIS OLD WESTERN GUY WAS
SHOWING HOW TO MAKE SOUR
DOUGH BISCUITS IN THE
BARREL OF A GIANT GUN.



AFTER POURING IN THE INGREDIENTS, HE
PROPOSED TO FIRE THE GUN AND
SHOOT OUT THE FINISHED BISCUITS.



NEXT
WE POUR IN THE...

THAT'S RIGHT. WE
POUR THE RUSTY
NAILS RIGHT
DOWN INTO...



HAW! HAW!
HAW! HAW!
HAW!

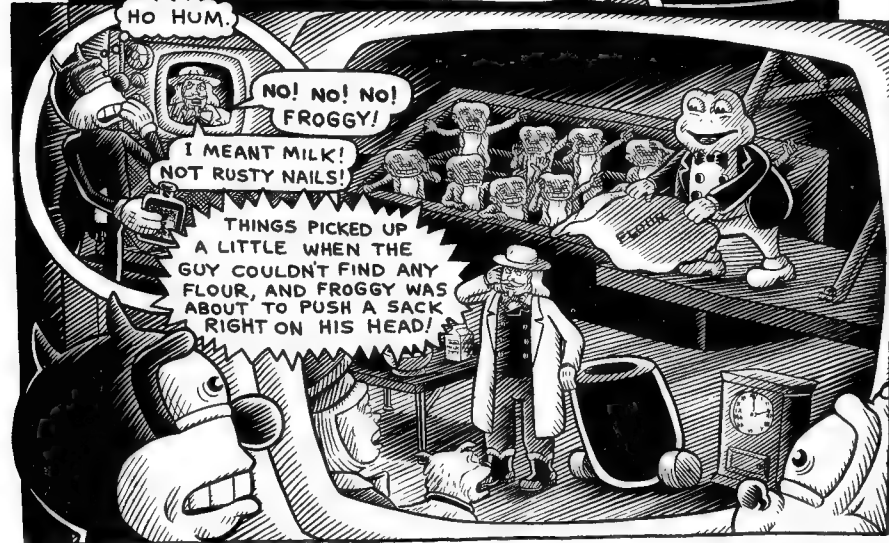
RUSTY NAILS! HAW! HAW!

HO HUM.

NO! NO! NO!
FROGGY!

I MEANT MILK!
NOT RUSTY NAILS!

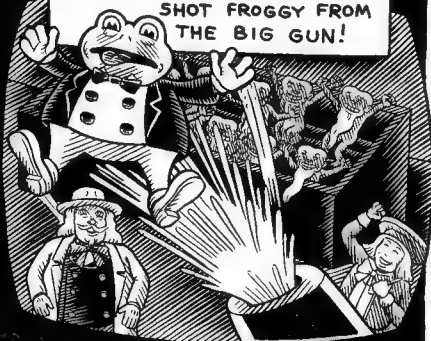
THINGS PICKED UP
A LITTLE WHEN THE
GUY COULDN'T FIND ANY
FLOUR, AND FROGGY WAS
ABOUT TO PUSH A SACK
RIGHT ON HIS HEAD!



EXCEPT BUSTER BROWN'S DOG,
TIGE, PUSHED FROGGY INSTEAD.



AND A MOMENT LATER, BUSTER
SHOT FROGGY FROM
THE BIG GUN!



AND FROGGY JUST TOTALLY
LOST IT!



IT WAS WEIRD!



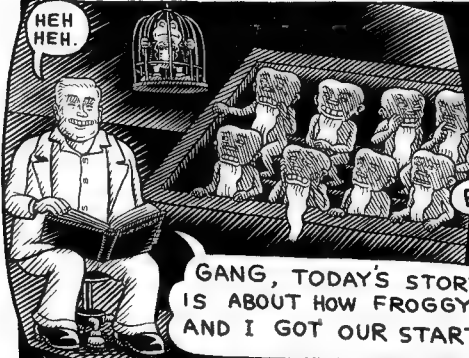
I'LL KILL YOU ALL!
IF IT'S THE LAST
FUCKING THING
I EVER DO!

Y'KNOW, THERE'S
SOMETHING KINDA
FAMILIAR ABOUT
THAT GUY!



BUT THE BIG SURPRISE CAME DURING THE SHOW'S STORY TIME SEGMENT.

HEH
HEH.



GANG, TODAY'S STORY
IS ABOUT HOW FROGGY
AND I GOT OUR START.

BAH!

OUR STORY
BEGINS IN 1905,
SOMEWHERE IN
THE GEORGIA
PINES!



SMILIN' ED'S STORIES

NOW PICTURE ME, A LAD
OF TEN, CHAINED NAKED BEHIND A
CABIN, BEING FATTENED LIKE
A SLAUGHTER BOUND FARM
ANIMAL!

I COULDN'T REMEMBER HOW
I'D GOTTEN THERE OR WHO I
WAS! BUT LITTLE BY LITTLE,
AS I PUT ON WEIGHT,



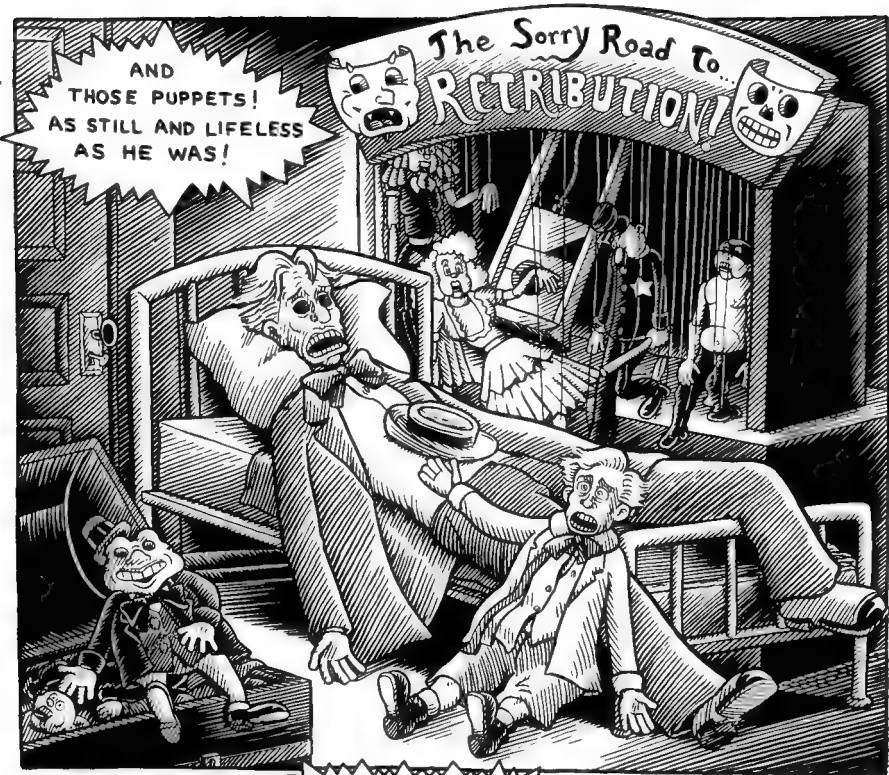
... SMALL FRAGMENTS OF MEMORY BEGAN TO RETURN.

ME,
IN A
STRANGE
ROOM!

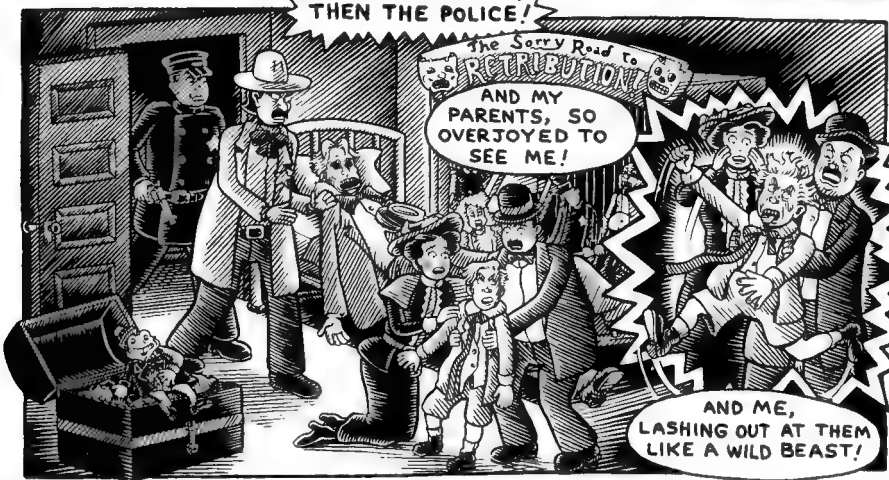
... LOUD
POUNDING ON
A DOOR,

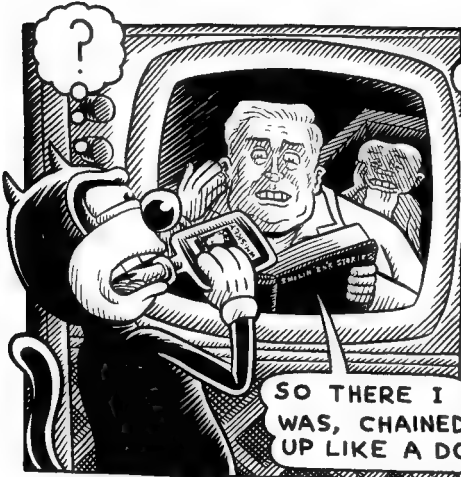
... A BODY WITH NO
EYES IN ITS SKULL!





THEN THE POLICE!





SO THERE I WAS, CHAINED UP LIKE A DOG!

AND ALL THE WHILE, THE OLD BLACK MAN THAT LIVED THERE, JUST KEPT FEEDING ME AND FATTENING ME UP!



WHEN I BEGAN TO CALM DOWN, THE MAN LET ME COME INSIDE FOR MORE FOOD, ALWAYS MORE FOOD!



AND THE MORE I ATE, THE MORE I REMEMBERED.



IT CAME BACK TO ME, HOW I WAS FIRST BROUGHT THERE, TOTALLY OUT OF MY HEAD!



...THE IMPROMPTU MIDNIGHT EXAMINATION I WAS GIVEN,



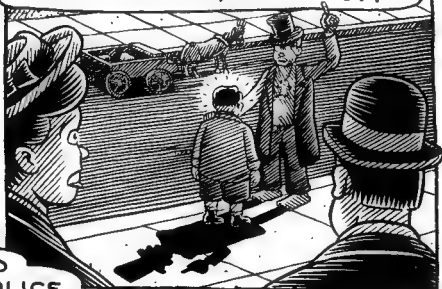
...AND THE BLACK MAN'S STRANGE DIAGNOSIS...

DEY'S A DEMON INSIDE O' HIM. WE GOTTS TO FATTEN HIM UP TO KEEP IT DOWN!

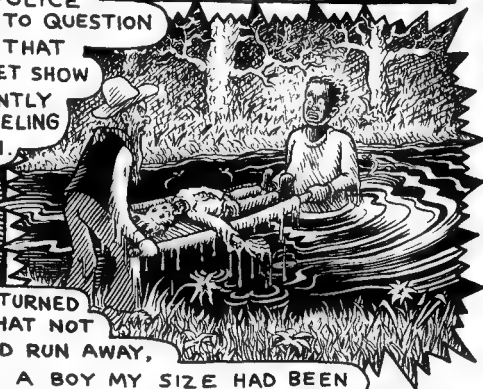
WELL, THE FATTENING DID BRING ME AROUND. AND ONE DAY I WAS RETURNED HOME; BUT NOT WITHOUT A WARNING!



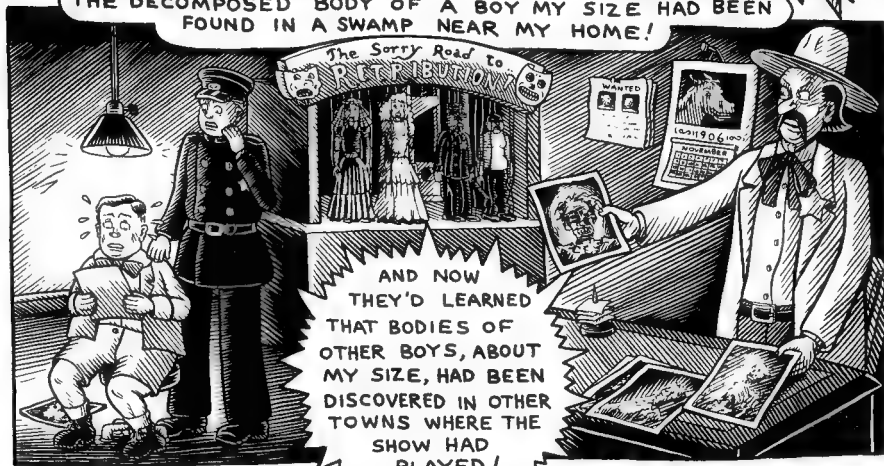
WE WERE WARNED THAT THE DEMON WAS ONLY SLEEPING. LOTS OF FOOD WOULD PROBABLY KEEP IT THAT WAY, BUT THERE WAS A POSSIBILITY THAT IT MIGHT SOME DAY, WAKE UP!



AND THE POLICE WERE EAGER TO QUESTION ME ABOUT THAT STRANGE PUPPET SHOW I'D APPARENTLY BEEN TRAVELING WITH.



IT TURNED OUT THAT NOT LONG AFTER I'D RUN AWAY, THE DECOMPOSED BODY OF A BOY MY SIZE HAD BEEN FOUND IN A SWAMP NEAR MY HOME!



AND NOW THEY'D LEARNED THAT BODIES OF OTHER BOYS, ABOUT MY SIZE, HAD BEEN DISCOVERED IN OTHER TOWNS WHERE THE SHOW HAD PLAYED!

I WANTED TO HELP AND DID MY BEST TO EXPLAIN THE STRANGELY HYPNOTIC FASCINATION OF THE SHOW!



IT DEPICTED THE RISE AND FALL OF A NOTORIOUS FRENCH CRIMINAL!

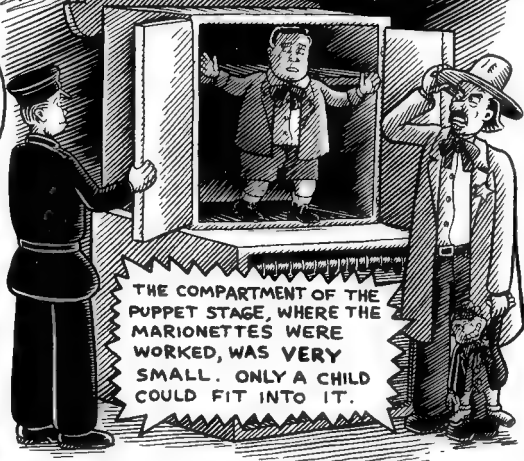


MOST OF THE PUPPETS WERE ORDINARY MARIONETTES; BUT THE PUPPET PORTRAYING THE MURDERER WAS MOST EXTRAORDINARY!



IT SEEMED TO MOVE WITHOUT STRINGS, AS THOUGH HE WAS ACTUALLY ALIVE!

THEN I SHOWED THEM THE REASON I'D BEEN LURED AWAY TO WORK IN THE SHOW...



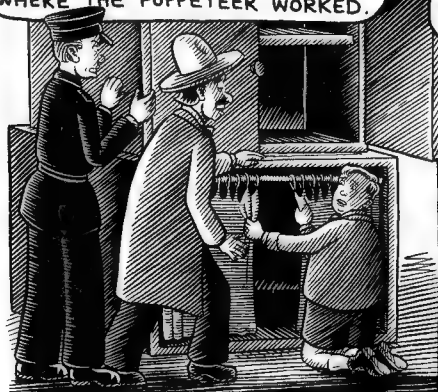
THE COMPARTMENT OF THE PUPPET STAGE, WHERE THE MARIONETTES WERE WORKED, WAS VERY SMALL. ONLY A CHILD COULD FIT INTO IT.

BUT HOW DID THE OTHER PUPPET WORK? AH, THAT WAS THE QUESTION!
AND AS I GAZED AT IT IN THE POLICE STATION, MY OWN CURIOSITY
ABOUT IT, CAME FLOODING BACK TO ME.



I TOLD THEM ABOUT THE TIME I
SNEAKED DOWN TO PEEK INTO THE
CURTAINED OFF COMPARTMENT,
WHERE THE PUPPETEER WORKED.

BUT AS MUCH AS I WANTED TO
HELP, I SIMPLY COULDN'T REMEMBER
WHAT I'D SEEN THAT DAY!



IT SEEMED THERE WAS NOTHING MORE TO DO BUT SEND ME BACK
HOME AND LET MY FOLKS KEEP ME FAT; AND HOPEFULLY, SANE!



BUT SOON, DISTURBING HINTS OF THE OLD BLACK MAN'S WARNING BEGAN TO SHOW.

♪ JESUS LOVES ME, THIS I KNOW,...

...AN' A BOTTLE O' RUM!
YO, HO, HO!

I DRIFTED INTO SHOW BUSINESS,AND WAS SUCCESSFUL, FOR AWHILE ; BUT THEN THE PROBLEM GOT EVEN WORSE!

SWEET
SONGS
By
Smilin'
Ed

SWEET
ADOLINE,

SHE'S FULLA
WINE

GWAN
HOME!

BOO!

AN' TURPENTINE!
HAW! HAW! HAW!

AND JOBS GOT SCARCE!

BUT SOMEHOW, I MANAGED TO GET A TRY-OUT IN A BRAND NEW FIELD: RADIO!

AND THEN SLEEPING BEAUTY SAID, ...

YER OLD MAN
LIVES INNA

GARBAGE CAN! HAW! HAW!

AND OH! WHAT A FIASCO
THAT WAS! OR SO I THOUGHT.

WHEN THEY ASKED WHAT HAPPENED, I LAMELY TOLD THEM I HAD A FROG IN MY THROAT!

WELL, KEEP
THAT FROG
IN,...

...THE LISTENERS LIKE HIM.

FINALLY, ME, AND THE DEMON IN ME, HAD FOUND A WAY TO CO-EXIST.

SO FROGGY WAS BORN, AND I HAD ONE OF THE FIRST POPULAR RADIO KID SHOWS.

SO KIDS, EVERY MORNING AT TEN,...

POUR WATER IN YOUR RADIO, HAW! HAW!

NO! NO! NO! FROGGY, WHAT I MEANT TO SAY WAS,...

THROW IT OUT THE WINDOW! HAW! HAW! HAW!

TUNE IN Smilin' Ed and Froggy!



SOON FROGGY DOLLS WERE A POPULAR KID'S TOY!



WHEN TELEVISION CAME IN, THE BIG QUESTION WAS, WHAT MANNER OF CARTOON OR PUPPET WOULD WE USE TO DEPICT FROGGY IN THE NEW MEDIUM.



BUT THE NEXT MORNING, THE PROBLEM HAD BEEN MYSTERIOUSLY SOLVED!



AND I SUDDENLY FELT STRANGELY FREE AND UNHAUNTED! IT WAS AS THOUGH THE DEMON THAT HAD BEEN IN ME WAS NOW IN THAT DOLL!

OF COURSE IT DID BRING BACK A FEW DISTURBING, HALF-FORGOTTEN THOUGHTS ABOUT THAT OLD PUPPET SHOW; BUT ON THE OTHER HAND,



I HADN'T FELT SO GOOD IN YEARS.

EVERAL TIMES, I CAUGHT HIM LURING KIDS OFF TO SOME DARK STUDIO CORNER TO DO GOD ONLY KNOWS WHAT!

TO PREVENT ANY FUTURE PROBLEMS OF THAT SORT, I HAD ONE SHOT OF KIDS FILMED THAT WE COULD USE OVER AND OVER ON EACH SHOW.



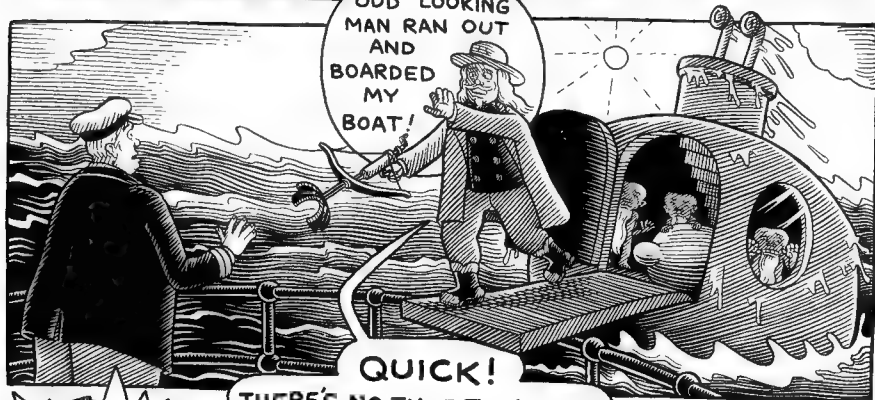
THEN CAME THAT
FATEFUL DAY
IN 1954.



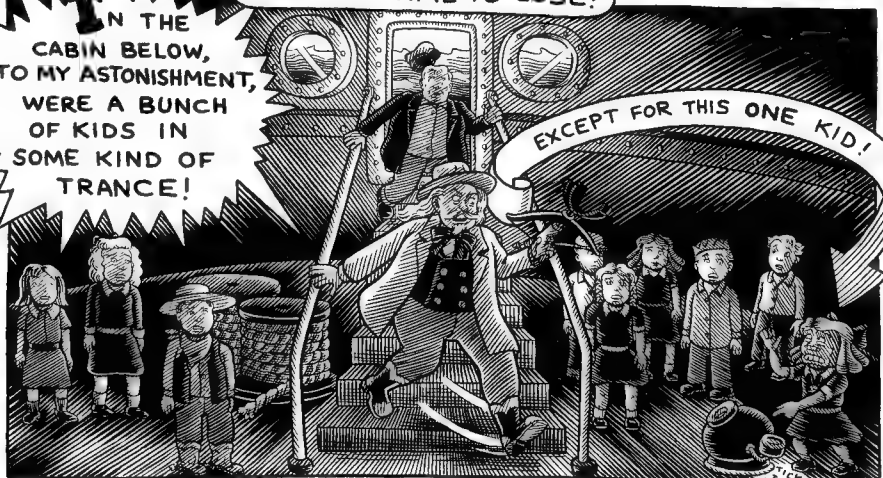
BAH! DON'T
EVEN REMIND
ME!



T DECIDED
TO TAKE A BREAK
AND GO FOR A
RIDE IN MY BRAND
NEW CABIN
CRUISER.



IN THE CABIN BELOW, TO MY ASTONISHMENT, WERE A BUNCH OF KIDS IN SOME KIND OF TRANCE!



WHO GAVE THE MAN AN OMINOUS
PIECE OF TICKING CLOCK WORK.



HE DASHED UPSTAIRS WITH IT,



...AND
SHOT IT
INTO THE
SKY!

SPROING!



BLAMO!

A SECOND LATER, IT
EXPLODED WITH A DEAFENING
ROAR!



THEN I DISCOVERED
THAT THE LITTLE GIRL
WHO FOUND THIS BOMB
WAS ACTUALLY A STRANGE
BEARDED MIDGET, DISGUISED
AS A GIRL!

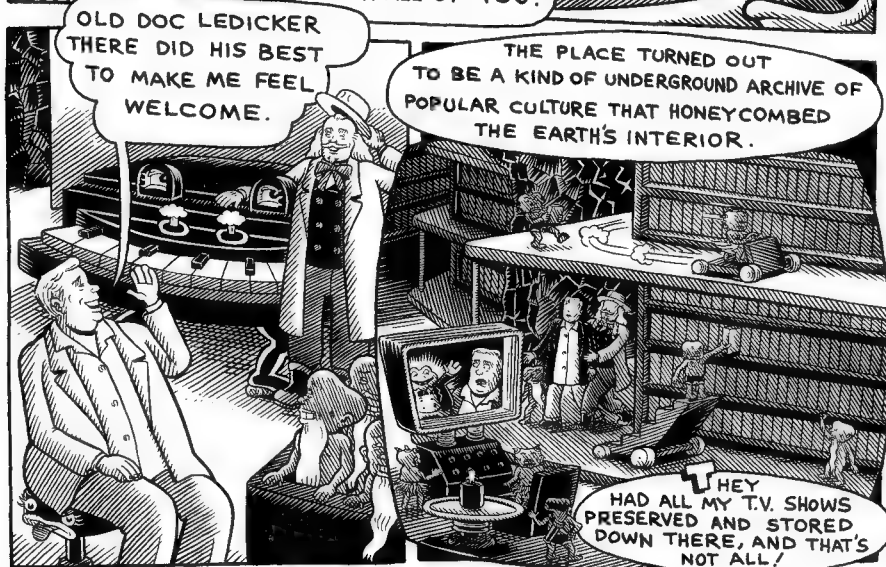
AND AS
SOON AS THE
BOAT SETTLED,
SOMETHING
EVEN MORE
BIZARRE
OCCURRED!



ELEVEN MORE OF THE MIDGET MEN BOARDED OUR BOAT
CARRYING A LARGE, CRUDE WOODEN CARVING!

THEY HELPED
ME TO MY FEET, BUT SUDDENLY
I FELT DIZZY ANDI GUESS
I FAINTED!





THEY HAD FOOTAGE
OF FROGGY AND ME
GOING WAY BACK.


I WAS
ASTOUNDED!

LEASTWAYS, UNTIL
I GOT TO UNDERSTAND
THESE LITTLE GUYS BETTER.

ALTHOUGH I'VE GOT TO
ADMIT,

...AT THE TIME
IT TOOK A HEAP OF CONVINCING.





DOC EXPLAINED
TO ME HOW
EVERYTHING
THESE GUYS SEE,


... IS BEAMED TO A
SPACE STATION, THIRTY
THOUSAND MILES AWAY!

WHERE
IT'S RECORDED ON
WHAT THEY CALL
LASER STORY
CHIPS!


OH BROTHER!

HEY! WHAT IS
THIS!
THE
TWILIGHT
ZONE?


THESE STORY CHIPS
ARE ALL COLLECTED AND STORED
BY OUR HOSTS DOWN HERE,
THE
GREY ONES.



IN FACT THE WHOLE
THING MADE ME DIZZY.
AND I TOLD DOC
I WANTED TO
GO HOME.




DOC WAS NICE
ABOUT IT; SAID HE WOULDN'T
DREAM OF KEEPING ME HERE
AGAINST MY WILL.



BUT HE TOLD ME
FRANKLY THAT RETURNING
ME MIGHT BE JUST
A BIT DICEY.




YOU SEE, EVEN
AS WE SPEAK,
YOUR BODY
IS BEING
DISCOVERED
ON YOUR
CABIN
CRUISER.



TO EXPLAIN, HE
SHOWED ME A LASER STORY CHIP,
MADE THE DAY BEFORE...



WHAT YOU JUST
SAW WAS WHAT
USED TO BE
DESCRIBED AS
A CHANGELING
IN OLD FAIRY
TALES.



SOME
MIGHT CALL IT AN
OLD FAIRY TRICK,
BUT IT MIGHT BE
CHARACTERIZED AS
AN ADVANCED
FORM OF HYPNOTIC
SUGGESTION.

TO BE CONTINUED...

THE zERO zERO BOOKSHELF

KIM DEITCH gALORE!

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SPECIAL BONUS: OFFER: Order any combination of Kim Deitch items from this page and get a 10% discount! And don't miss "The Strange Secret of Molly O'Dare" in *ZERO ZERO* #6 through #8!

zERO zERO BACK ISSUES

ZERO ZERO #1 (March/April 1995): Big debut issue, featuring Ted Stearn's "Fuzz and Pluck." The Man With the Big Head" by David Holzmann, Frank Stack's "New Adventures of Jesus," plus Pat Moriarty and Charles Bukowski, Max Andersson, Glenn Head, Henriette Valium, the first Collier strip, and a Pantar cover! \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #2 (May/June 1995): Every issue from here on features "The Chuckling Whatsin'" by Richard Sala. Also, Mack White's "Homunculus," "Car-Boy" by Max Andersson, new "Trashman" story by Spain, David Mazzucchelli, Mats!?, and more. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #3 (July 1995): ZZ debuts from Skip Williamson and Rick Altergott, Max Andersson's "Lolita," plus Mark Newgarden, "Fuzz and Pluck," and a cover by Henriette Valium. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #4 (August 1995): "Meat Box" by Kaz and Georgarakis premieres, plus Carol Tyler, Max Andersson, Mark Beyer, a Ted Stearn "dream" story, and Al Columbia's notorious "I Was Killing When Killing Wasn't Cool." \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #5 (Sept./Oct. 1995): Joe Coleman cover! Chris Ware frontpiece! Justin Green back cover! Plus Kim Deitch, extra-long Andersson Car-Boy story, "Meat Box," and "Homunculus." \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #6 (Nov./Dec. 1995): Kim Deitch premieres "The Strange Secret of Molly O'Dare"! Plus "Fuzz and Pluck," Skip Williamson, Penny Van Horn, and Rick Altergott. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #7 (Jan./Feb. 1996): "Molly O'Dare" continues! 18-page "Best World" cover story by Bill Griffith! Plus Max Andersson, Gilbert Hernandez, Archer Prewitt, and more. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #8 (March/April 1996): Extra-long anniversary issue, with 2-color "So! Boy" story by Archer Prewitt, Al Columbia, the end of "Molly O'Dare," Henriette Valium, "Homunculus" and "Fuzz and Pluck," and a cover by Charles Burns. \$5.95

ZERO ZERO #9 (May/June 1996): Snappy Sammy Smoot returns in a new story and cover by Skip Williamson! Sam Henderson and Stephane Blanquet lose their ZZ cherries, the first story by Susan Catherine and Oscar Zarate, and a Valium back cover. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #10 (July 1996): Ultra-groovy Drew Friedman cover! Eight Henriette Valium strips! A "Monroe" story by Sam Henderson! Plus Max Andersson, Aleksandar Zograf, Jeff Johnson, more! \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #11 (August 1996): Dave Cooper's "Suckle" (which will run from #11 to #16 and #18 to #20) premieres! Ted Stearn, Kaz, David Mazzucchelli, Max Andersson, and Roy Tompkins. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #12 (Sept./Oct. 1996): Max Andersson's 15-page "Death," his biggest story since *Pinky!* P. Revers and Joakim Pirinen make their ZZ debuts, plus Michael Dougan and a back cover by Dan Clowes. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #13 (Nov./Dec. 1996): Extra-long "Fuzz and Pluck" chapter, plus Sam Henderson, Skip Williamson, "Homunculus," Idiotland by Doug Allen, and Jim Blanchard! \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #14 (Jan./Feb. 1997): Stephane Blanquet cover, plus two, count 'em two, "Silent Stories"! Also, Mike Diana, Terry LaBan, and a Kim Deitch back cover. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #15 (March 1997): Joe Sacco heads for Bosnia with 15-page "Christmas With Karadzic," first major story since Palestine!

Plus Revers, Valium, Henderson, Columbia, and the serials. \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #16 (April/May 1997): Big ol' Brute of an anniversary issue, with a full-color "Jimmy Corrigan" story by Chris Ware, striking 2-color stories by Al Columbia ("Blood Clot Boy") and Henriette Valium ("The Man in the Sewer"), a new chapter of "MeatBox," plus Joakim Pirinen, Penny van Horn, Skip Williamson, P. Revers, Aleksandar Zograf, Krystine Krytte, and a cover by Kaz. \$5.95

ZERO ZERO #17 (June 1997): Michael Dougan's terrifying "Double Booked"! Penultimate "Chuckling Whatsin'," new "Fuzz and Pluck" chapter, the divine Miss Renée French, and more! \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #18 (July 1997): Especially lame Sam Henderson cover story! "Young Jeffrey Dahmer" by Derf! Plus J.R. Williams, M.L. Teague, Archer Prewitt, and Walt Holcombe! \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #19 (August 1997): First installment of "Pop. 666" by Semerano and Ghermandi! Final episode of "Meat Box"! Plus "Crumple," "Johnny Gun" by Max Andersson, and short stories and illustrations by Blanquet, Glenn Head, and Jeff Johnson! \$3.95

ZERO ZERO #20 (Sept.-Oct. 1997): The grand finale of "Crumple" The American premiere of Lewis Trondheim! Cover and feature strip by Glenn Head! Another two-color masterpiece by Al Columbia! Plus a full-color strip of M.L. Teague, and chapters of "Pop. 666" and "Homunculus"! \$3.95

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